

OLC 71-0942
9 September 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Conversation with John Lehman of the White House Staff

1. This morning John Lehman, of Dr. Kissinger's staff, called and asked if I had received a copy of Senator Stennis' letter to the President which he had sent over yesterday. I said we had not yet received it and would like to get it promptly so I would send over a courier to pick up another copy.
2. Lehman said he wanted to get my views since Secretary Laird and Mr. Helms had talked to Senator Stennis last week (Lehman was apparently confused--the only such conversations we know of were several weeks ago) and it had been agreed that Stennis would hold-the-line this year against floor amendments, but beyond this year we'd have to find other arrangements. Lehman said Stennis' primary concern was the method of funding rather than the administration of the funds.
3. Lehman said he wanted to know the Agency position on this, and spoke of an early LIG meeting at which he would like to hear from us. He said the problem really fell partly on the LIG and partly on the SRG, and he wasn't sure where it best be discussed. However, he said we would have to have a discussion of just what new mechanisms we could develop to cope with the situation, and what position should be taken on the floor of the Senate regarding the funding question.
4. I said if he planned to get into details on various funding devices at a LIG meeting, I would like to bring along a colleague from the area division who is familiar with the practical operational problems. Lehman said this was fine.
5. I told Lehman we had provided Senator Stennis with a background paper on the history of our involvement in Laos, a copy of which the Director was sending to Dr. Kissinger.

6. I told Lehman that after we had a chance to ponder the implications of Senator Stennis' letter to the President, we'd be in a better position on the problem.

7. He asked if I thought the secret Senate debate might take place next week, and I said this was at least a possibility.

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JOHN M. MAURY
Legislative Counsel

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